GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2296
ANSWERED ON:08.08.2005
DECLINE IN WATER TABLE
Khan Shri Mohammad Tahir;Kushwaha Shri Narendra Kumar;Munshiram Shri

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the United Nations and the World Watch Institute have expressed apprehensions in their report about shortage of drinking water in India due to decline in water table thereby posing a threat of serious water crisis in the country as appearing in 'Rashtriya Sahara' dated June 15, 2005;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has conducted any survey in the districts of such States facing water crisis; and

(d) if so, the number of the States identified and the action taken by the Government thereon?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV)

(a) to (d) Yes, Sir. A long-term analysis of ground water levels by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), under the Ministry of Water Resources, during the years 1995-2004, indicates significant decline (more than 20 cm/year) in ground water levels in 362 districts of 23 States/Union Territories. Decline in ground water level is one of the reasons for shortage of drinking water.

'Water' being a State subject, it is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Governments to formulate plans for augmenting water resources. The CGWB has prepared a report entitled "Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Ground Water", which envisages recharge of 36453 Million Cubic Meter volume of surplus monsoon runoff, through construction of 39.25 lakhs artificial recharge and roof top rain water harvesting structures. The CGWB has implemented a Central Sector Scheme for Study of Recharge to Ground Water in the country during the VIII & IX Five Year Plans. The following steps have also been taken by the Union Government in this regard:-

(i) Circulation of a Model Bill in the year 1970 which was re-circulated in 1992 and again in 1996 to all the States/Union Territories to enable them to enact suitable legislation for regulation and control of ground water development. A revised Model Bill, 2005 to regulate and control the development and management of ground water has been again circulated to all the States/Union Territories.

(ii) Circulation of Manual/Guidelines on Artificial Recharge of Ground Water to the States/Union Territories to enable them to formulate area specific artificial recharge schemes to check the declining trend of ground water levels.

(iii) Central Ministries/Departments of Railways, Defence, Posts, Telecommunications, Central Public Works Department and National Highways Authority of India have been requested to provide roof top rain water harvesting structures in the buildings under their control.

(iv) States/UTs have been requested to provide water harvesting structures in buildings under their administrative control.

(v) All the States/Union Territories have been requested for advising the local bodies in their respective States/Union Territories to allow rebate in property tax to persons, who adopt roof top rainwater harvesting in their premises.

(vi) CGWB has provided technical guidance on rain water harvesting to around 2000 agencies, including State Government agencies, educational institutions, private entrepreneurs and individuals.

(vii) The Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) constituted under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 has notified 11 critical areas on consideration of over-exploitation of ground water resources and 32 over-exploited areas for registration of ground water structures.

(viii) Launching of a website on Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting (www.cgwb.net) to make aware and educate the public about various techniques of harvesting rainwater and store it for future use.

(ix) Organisation of mass awareness programmes and training courses on rainwater harvesting and artificial recharge of ground water.

(x) Rain Water Harvesting campaign has been launched keeping in view the various target groups like youth and children, women, farmers and villagers, policy and opinion makers. Publicity through print media, telecasting of spots on the television, broadcasting messages on radio, holding of seminars, workshops, conferences etc., have been undertaken for the purpose.

(xi) The Ministry of Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation, Government of India have amended Building Bye- laws, 1983, making provision for water harvesting through storing of water run-off including rain water in all new buildings on plots of 100 square meters and above in Delhi mandatory. Similarly, State Governments of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan and Kerala have made roof top rain water harvesting mandatory in specified cases.

(xii) For conservation of ground water based drinking water sources, 5% of total funds under the Centrally Sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) being released to the States is earmarked for source sustainability which inter-alia includes rain water harvesting, water conservation and artificial recharge.

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